

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 419

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJECT: WATER MARGIN, CAPITALIST ROADERS AND CAPITULATION

1. SUMMARY: THAT STRANGE PHENOMENON WHICH HAS BEEN AROUND SINCE LAST AUGUST, THE CRITICISM AND DISCUSSION OF THE MING DYNASTY NOVEL WATER MARGIN, IS BEING FOLDED ALONG WITH SOME EARLIER CAMPAIGNS INTO THE PUBLIC CRITICISM OF TENG HSIAO-PING AND OTHER "UNREPENTANT CAPITALIST ROADERS." WE SPECULATE THAT A FURTHER USE OF THE WATER MARGIN MATERIAL MIGHT BE TO HELP PREPARE THE GROUND FOR CHARGING TENG AT LEAST, LIKE LIU SHAO-CHI AND LIN PIAO BEFORE HIM, WITH HAVING CAPITULATED TO "SOVIET REVISIONIST SOCIAL-IMPERIAL-ISM."
END SUMMARY.

2. THE RECENT POSTER AND MEDIA ATTACKS ON CHINA'S CURRENT "CAPITALIST ROADERS" AND "REVISIONISTS" HAVE AT TIMES INCORPORATED, AND BROUGHT RENEWED ATTENTION TO, THE CRITICISM CAMPAIGN WHICH BEGAN LAST SUMMER UTILIZING MATERIAL IN THE ANCIENT NOVEL WATER MARGIN AS "NEGATIVE TEACHING MATERIAL" ON
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HOW REVOLUTION CAN BE TURNED INTO "CAPITULATION" IF TAKEN OVER BY

THE WRONG PEOPLE. MOST NOTABLY, THE MARCH 10 PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL WHICH OFFICIALLY DEFINES THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE "RIGHT DEVIATIONIST WIND" INCLUDES THIS PASSAGE: "JUST LIKE SUNG CHIANG IN 'WATER MARGIN', WHO WAS IN THE RANKS OF A PEASANTS' UPRISING BUT REPRESENTED THE LANDLORD CLASS, THE CAPITALIST ROADERS ARE 'COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERS' IN NAME BUT IN ACTUALITY REPRESENT THE NEW AND OLD BOURGEOIS CLASYXMZ

3. SOME OF THIS PRESENT ATTENTION TO WATER MARGIN CAN PROBABLY BE ASCRIBED TO SELF-CONGRATULATION ON THE PART OF THOSE (YAO WEN-YUAN DOUBTLESS AMONG THEM) WHO DEVELOPED THE CAMPAIGN, POSSIBLY STARTING AS EARLY AS THE TIME OF TENG'S REHABILITATION IN 1973, AND LAUNCHED IT IN AUGUST 1975 (WITH MAO'S PUBLIC BLESSING ADDED IN SEPTEMBER), A TIME WHEN TENG WAS RIDING HIGH AND, ACCORDING TO PRESENT ACCOUNTS, WAS BLOWING UP THE "RIGHT DEVIATIONIST WIND" IN VARIOUS FIELDS.

4. BUT, THE FULL MORAL OF THE WATER MARGIN CRITICISM, AS APPLIED TO CURRENT TARGETS, HAS YET TO BE PLAYED UP. PERHAPS IT NEVER WILL BE. YET THE RENOWNED ATTENTION TO THIS STRANGE CAMPAIGN-- E.G., IN ADDITION TO THE EDITORIAL, THE PROMINENCE GIVEN WATER MARGIN IN THE FEBRUARY 27 PEKING REVIEW, THE COMMENTARY ON PAGE 1 AND AN ARTICLE ON PAGE 2 OF THE FEBRUARY 28 KUANGMING DAILY, THE FREQUENT MEDIA USE OF THE SLOGAN " AS LONG AS THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE WALKING THE CAPITALIST ROAD THERE CAN CERTAINLY BE CAPITULATIONISTS" -- SUGGESTS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THOSE PUSHING IT WOULD LIKE TO APPLY TO TENG, AT LEAST, THE FORMULA USED IN THE PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL WHICH OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED THE WATER MARGIN CAMPAIGN LAST SEPTEMBER 4: "WHOEVER PRACTICES REVISIONISM PRACTICES CAPITULATIONISM--CLASS CAPITULATIONISM IN NATIONAL AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL CAPITULATIONISM IN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS."

AT THAT TIME THE CASES OF LIU AND LIN WERE OFFERED AS PROOF: "BOTH OF THEM CAPITULATED TO SOVIET REVISIONIST SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM."

5. THOUGH TENG IS STILL UNNAMED IN THE PRC PUBLIC MEDIA, HIS DOMESTIC POLICIES HAVE BEEN LABELLED THERE AS REVISIONIST AND CUT FROM THE SAME CLOTH AS LIU'S AND LIN'S, AND CAMPUS SLOGANS HAVE LINKED THE THREE NAMES. MAO'S BLESSING FOR THE WATER MARGIN CAMPAIGN, IN THE SEPTEMBER 4, 1976 PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL, FEAT-CONFIDENTIAL

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URED A TERSE CRITICISM OF THE NOVEL'S LEADING CHARACTER/CAPITULATIONIST SUNG CHIANG. A FEW POSTERS (THE FIRST ONES WE'VE HEARD OF APPEARED IN SHANGHAI EARLY LAST MONTH) HAVE REFERRED TO TENG

AS A SUNG CHIANG AND THE KUANGMING COMMENTARY AND ARTICLE CITED ABOVE CAME VERY CLOSE TO IT. WHETHER OR NOT MAO ACTUALLY HAD TENG IN MIND WHEN HE ISSUED THE SUNG CHIANG CRITICISM, IT WOULD BE NO GREAT JOB NOW FOR THE ARTFUL PROPAGAN-

DISTS AT WORK ON TENG TO MAKE IT APPEAR THAT HE DID, AND THAT ACCORDINGLY THE CHAIRMAN SINCE LAST SEPTEMBER, AT LEAST, HAD ALSO HAD IN MIND ADDING TENG TO THE LIST OF CAPITULATIONISTS TO SOVIET REVISIONIST SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM. BUT THE PROPOSITION THAT TENG, WITH HIS STRONG ANTI-SOVIET CREDENTIALS IN FOREIGN POLICY, HAD CAPITULATED TO THE SOVIETS WOULD BE A HARD ONE TO SELL ABROAD, AND IT COULD BE WITH THIS PROBLEM IN MIND THAT WATER MARGIN HAS COME BACK TO THE PAGES OF PEKING REVIEW. THE EXPLANATION OF WATER MARGIN, THE CAMPAIGN AND THE NOVEL, IN THE FEBRUARY 27 PEKING REVIEW BREAKS NO NEW GROUND, BUT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE EDITORIAL OF LAST SEPTEMBER IN PROCLAIMING OF "LIU SHAO-CHI, LIN PIAO AND THEIR LIKE" THAT "INTERNALLY THEY PRACTICED CALSS CAPITULATIONISM AND EXTERNALLY, NATIONAL CAPITULATIONISM." THAYER

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